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Our Solace and our Duty in this Crisis.

A SERMON
FOR
THE LAST NIGHT
OF
MR. BUCHANAN'S
PRESIDENTIAL ADMINISTRATION,

PREACHED IN THE
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,

POUGHKEEPSIE, N. Y.,

On Sabbath Evening, March 3d, 1861,

BY MOSES, ^{Doit} TYLER,

PASTOR.

POUGHKEEPSIE:

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POUGHKEEPSIE, MARCH 4, 1861.

MOSES TYLER,

Pastor of the First Congregational Church of Poughkeepsie :

DEAR SIR:—The undersigned respectfully request, for publication, a copy of your Sermon delivered Sunday evening, March 3d. We ask this favor, from a conviction that a careful study of the subject there presented by you will be of great service to all those who are asking the important question, "What is the Christian's duty in regard to the great Crisis in our National Affairs"? We hope you will feel willing to comply with our request.

Very respectfully,

John Cooper, M. D.,	A. B. Smith,	Isaac I. Platt,
R. W. Frost,	W. C. Allen,	Geo. H. Beattys,
T. B. Bunnell,	G. K. Lawrence,	J. H. Cogswell,
Chas. H. S. Williams, Jr.,	M. C. Sands,	N. H. Schram,
W. Schram,	W. I. Husted,	Alfred Atkins,
Charles A. Townsend,	Wm. Backus,	D. B. Jaycookes,
James M. Van Wagner,	Abraham Wiltsie,	E. W. Mason,
S. Knickerbocker,	Jos. G. Frost,	Chas. H. Roberts,
J. H. Jackson,	Geo. Hannah,	Edw'd Storm,
F. Chichester,	Wm. E. Beardsley,	Sidney Fowler,
C. H. Sedgwick,	Geo. Wilkinson,	J. K. Rice,
Geo. W. McLellan,	King, Brothers,	Charles Scott,
Geo. W. Caldwell,	A. G. Purdy,	J. Wiltsie,
A. B. Wiggin,	Enos C. Andrus,	F. A. Utter,
J. H. Mann,	John J. Brooks.	

POUGHKEEPSIE, MARCH 4, 1861.

Messrs. J. Cooper, M. D., A. B. Smith, and others :

GENTLEMEN :—I send you herewith a copy of the Sermon to which your note refers.

Very respectfully yours,

MOSES TYLER.

SERMON.

“And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.”—1 CORINTHIANS, XII: 5.

The time-pieces in your pockets are ticking history to-night.

The atmosphere, which wraps this young continent, is tremulous with the throb of a far-resounding crisis.

Between the hour of this evening's service and to-morrow's day-break, will lie a strip of time that is to form the terminal boundary of one mighty, chaotic and influential tract, in the experience of a hemisphere.

Another four years of American history have unfolded their tragedy and their comedy, and have disappeared behind the curtain of eternity;—behind that curtain from whose envelopments neither plaudits nor condemnations will tempt them to emerge.

This Sabbath evening's hours are the expiring ones in the life of one great quadrennial Administration. The clock of the Republic, wound up to run for forty-eight months, now palpitates languidly through its last strokes, and yields the sluggish weight to its brief resting-place. To-morrow, that hand which represents the majesty of the People's Will, is to put the key into the socket, and wind the works for a new period in the onward flow of our civic life.

Under any circumstances, this would be an impressive night—a time for that

“————— kindly mood of melancholy,
That wings the soul and points her to the skies.”

Under any circumstances, it would be a very solemn fact to us that we had reached the end of another chapter in time, so distinct and so large. For these gov-

ernmental stages, these national Olympiads, are significant to the individual, as well as to the mass. They are way-marks in our own personal lives. With most bewildering rapidity, do these administrative terms chip off large segments from our earthly existence. They are data which sweep back across our entire past; we reckon our private histories by them; and as we reflect that each one means four whole years, we are reminded that time's throat is a very broad one, and that it is swallowing down our little life-spans, with huge and greedy mouthfuls.

"Fierce Spirit of the glass and scythe—what power
Can stay him in his silent course, or melt
His iron heart with pity!"

Under ordinary circumstances, the simple fact of having brought to an end another four years, would be an incident mighty with lessons to us all, and most especially worthy of commemoration in a Christian Church, and amid the still influences of this sacred hour.

But why need we try to muffle and disguise the fact that to all these ordinary and manifold sources of interest are added, at this present juncture, a multitude of others, which reach around our souls with cold and spectral hands, chilling us to fear, and producing,

"————— For many days
And nights as many,
That nameless terror in the breast,
Making us timid and afraid
Of God and his mysterious ways."

We are in the midst of a revolution. The very foundations of the Commonwealth are heaving with the commotions of the hour. We are already encountering the fury of an earth-blinding tempest; and the most rapt of our seers know not whether this be but the outer skirts of the storm, and whether we are not swiftly plunging forward toward its whirling centre, to

experience a wrath and a tumult and a peril, compared with which, what we have now felt is but a faint and harmless prelude. In this portentous hour, our political meteorology seems baffled. Our sages are confounded;—they can but gather together in unpeaceful Peace Conventions, and talk, day by day, “an infinite deal of nothing”; and finally dissolve in a cloud of glory over resolutions carried through by artifice, and denounced as soon as taken home. Our best Statesmanship all this while is indeed still oracular; but now, alas, oracular only because ambiguous. No man tells us what or where the end is to be. We know not into what shape this Confusion will issue. It seems not improbable that *our* eyes are to see that “veil” uplifted which Daniel Webster shrank from penetrating; and that *our* vision, even though it should be seared with the stare, must look, full-fronted, upon “that scene” lying behind, from the sight of which *he* prayed God to be delivered. Where is the prophet of pleasant things who will venture to assure us that *we* are not to behold, and very soon, “the sun in heaven, shining upon the broken and dishonored fragments of a once glorious Union; on states dissevered, discordant, belligerent, on a land rent with civil feuds, or drenched, it may be, with fraternal blood.” Or, who can prove to us that we are not to know one thing even worse than this? Who can make it certain to our minds, that up to that mocking idol, the hollow, glimmering and treacherous ghost of a Union—whose glorious *reality*, even, we hold to be infinitely

“————— less

Than liberty and truth and righteousness,”—

is to be offered, an ignominious holocaust, the dignity, the moral purity, the manhood, of twenty millions of freemen, and the eternal rights, so long outraged and ignored, of four millions of slaves!

Standing to-night, as we do, at the point of intersection between two governmental administrations, looking backward over the irreparable past of the retiring power and forward upon the possible future of the advancing one, and remembering that we are at that "tide" in our affairs which may "lead on to fortune," and to national redemption from a consuming curse, or which, not "taken at the flood," may leave us high on the unmoistened strand, the wrecker's victims and his spoil, we feel it to be our privilege, as Christian men and women, and in imitation of our grand old New England ancestry, whose Ecclesiastical Polity this Church glories to represent, and in the spirit of all the Churches in the American Revolution, to carry the awful business of the public weal into this our Puritan "Meeting House," and here to lay all our anxieties before that listening Father, whose help we devoutly crave, as we try to study our duties and our hopes in this momentous crisis.

Mine, I am distinctly conscious, is not the task of a statesman, to devise and advocate any scheme of civil policy. Nor am I, in this place, at all concerned with the special platforms or special interests of partisan organizations. My purpose is purely an ethical one. As the appointed teacher of one portion of Christ's beloved flock, your pastor is called upon, by every obligation to the Master and to yourselves, to show how the principles of our faith may guide our individual action and affect our individual peace, amid the perturbations of the time. What would the Master have us to do? What would he have us to think? How would he have us to feel?

In brooding over this subject for many days and weeks, that I might from time to time fittingly speak here in my place what should seem to be needed, dur-

ing these agitations, the singularly applicable verse which I have made the text, to-night, has constantly floated before my mind. "And there are differences of administrations but the same Lord!" I know that the superficial reference of this ancient sentence is not the same as the identical words would have, if constructed now and among us. I know that when King James' forty-seven scholars, two centuries ago, translated by the expression, "differences of administrations," Paul's phrase, *διαφορεσεις διακονιων*, they intended no prophetic allusion to the governmental peculiarities of the unborn American Republic. And yet, even in the original use of these words, there is fundamentally that which harmonizes with the meaning of the English translation to our American ears. Paul was speaking of the various kinds and degrees of offices in the early Church; and his intention was to declare, that over these multifarious ministries, services, administrations, presided the same august and unchanging Lord. After all, then, the deeper thought underlying Paul's statement and comprehensive of it, is the very one which we had already attached to the sentence. Over all earth's changes the Lord rules, and changes not. These ministries, or services, or administrations, represent the visible, the formal, the official, the temporal, and therefore the mutable and fleeting, in this world; and though these may vary in eminence, and though, like all visibilities, they may wane and pass away, yet the Lord, standing in authority above them all, is the same to them all. The Eternal overshadows the evanescent: and through all degrees of official prerogative, and amid all the mutations of governmental power, we may look up unto the same, ever-abiding, ever-presiding Lord!

And this thought, it seems to me, will communicate

to us just those lessons for the hour, of which, as Christian men and women, we are now in need. The lessons to which I refer, classify themselves in two divisions.

I. LESSONS OF CONSOLATION.

II. LESSONS OF DUTY.

I. And in the first place, then, I assume it as a certainty that we do all need some strong, healthful, calming thought, to be our possession amid this anarchy.

Indeed, the man who at such an hour denies that, but for some divine trust, he would be soul-rocked and in anguish, acknowledges his own moral degradation: he confesses that the deadly peril of his country is to him a thing of indifference. He who is not utterly insensible to the eloquence of ancestral memories—to the sacred freightage of the May Flower, to the hallowed promises of the struggle for Independence, to the deeds and the hopes and the prayers of Washington; nay, he who is not utterly insensible to the throbbings of liberty all round the earth, to the destinies of civilization, and to the dearest hopes of the human race, must look forth across the troubled sea of the Commonwealth, with solicitude and with grief. Institutions, civil ligatures, ideas of the Constitution, which we had thought capable of sustaining any pressure, have broken and failed us. We are adrift on a stormy gulf. We need some light through the clouds: we need the chart of some mighty, guiding truth: we need what the old, storm-battered Puritans had, *a faith*—a faith in something higher than earth, and better than man. My friends, we all know what it was which made those Puritans so grand. *It was, that through all perils, reverses, obloquies, they believed in the living God!*

There is no hero-food in this practical Atheism of our century. And we shall never be nourished into

hero-proportions, until we come to feel it, as an eternal verity, that above all these convulsions on the earth, is our Heavenly Father, "the same Lord," who "walketh upon the wings of the wind," and who "holdeth the tempests in his fists." And when we do reach that vantage-ground, we shall begin to comprehend the victories of Marston Moor and Naseby and Drogheda; we shall begin to understand the martyrdom of Sir Henry Vane, and of Algernon Sidney; we shall begin to know whence came that taper-light which glimmered from Washington's hut through the long midnight of Valley Forge; and, for ourselves, we shall begin to inhale that breath, borne to us down the skies, which will lift us up from the ghastly paradise of despair. "There are differences of administrations, but *the same Lord*." That thought makes us assured that the foundations of this government were not laid in sand; that this marvellous contexture of Anglo-American life has a meaning; and that this Empire of the People, born in prayer and in suffering and in consecration, is not thus suddenly to explode before the universe, to be time's mockery and byword!

And furthermore, my friends, if God be "the same Lord," then we know that while this Ship of the Republic, put together by those grand, godly, old master-builders of the 17th and 18th centuries, is not to go to pieces thus early in its cruise, so also God will not prosper the projects of those men who would metamorphose the craft of freedom into a gigantic slave-ship, consecrated with the satanic apparatus of the "Middle Passage," and prowling the seas, for the single purpose of defending, spreading and perpetuating this atrocious system of human bondage.

Both these hopes, my friends, may be our consolation to-night: First, the ultimate safety and unity of the

Republic. We are not to be a hemisphere of petty principalities. Nature, in the conformation of the continent, has decreed that we shall be one : while the intelligence and virtue of our population, and the interests of man, unite with our faith in Providence, and comport with these edicts of Nature. And if *one* Republic, then a *free* Republic. The fiat has gone forth. Slavery on this continent is doomed. Nay, its own dogs everywhere are turning against it, and hounding it out of the world. This is the irresistible destiny of events. The black stain is to be erased from our standard. The infamous ethics of Ostend Manifestoes, and Dred Scott Decisions, and Lecompton Constitutions, are to be revoked. Yes, my friends, from this ancient faith in our fathers' God, who is "the same Lord" over all the centuries, we derive for the present hour this two-fold lesson of consolation ;—that out of all this commotion God will ultimately deliver us, a united and a free Republic.

I say, *ultimately*. It is not for such as I to speak of precise times or modes. Nor am I so sanguine as to predict that this final deliverance will be seen by us ; for I remember that saddening page of Guizot, on which he says : "In all great events, how many unknown and disastrous efforts must have been made, before the successful one ! Providence, upon all occasions, in order to accomplish its designs, is prodigal of courage, of virtues, of sacrifices, of men ; and it is only after a vast number of unknown attempts, apparently lost, after a host of noble hearts have fallen into despair, convinced that their cause was ruined, that it triumphs !"

II. Turning, now, from the lessons of consolation, which these times require, let us try to study also their lessons of duty.

And that I may grasp a cluster of duties within a single proposition, I would say, in the outset, that this is pre-eminently a period for *serious*, and *prayerful*, and *super-partisan thought*.

It is with a profound conviction of the importance of the proposition, that I claim that we are in the midst of events, which demand seriousness on our part.

This is no plea for a lugubrious and doleful spirit. For, with that faith in God, of which we have spoken, we ought to be animated, cheerful, and full of hope. But it is a principle of human nature that when men, having some huge and awful work to do, are equal to the work, and are resolved to achieve it, they are always serious. Seriousness, in view of such a business, involves that gravity of character, as opposed to a giddy and volatile trifling with momentous concerns, which is at once the sign and the pledge of men's earnestness, of their stability and force.

If there is any one trait in the French character, which, more than any other, makes us despair of its fitness for a nationality without a despotism, it is that hideous French mirth, that grinning and chattering and flippancy of theirs, amid terrible civic convulsions. It leads us to feel that the French soul is, after all, too shallow a sea for the leviathan of liberty to swim in.

So has it seemed to me that there is something ghastly in the factitious merriment which some people affect in these times. How unnatural, that amid perils to our country's greatness and goodness, so vast, so mysterious, so appalling, American citizens can see nothing but pabulum for jests and illustrations for the Comic Weeklies! It makes one fear that the old hero-blood of the fathers has died out of their children's veins. Ah, my friends, the men who, in any century, have founded nations or saved them, have not been chatter-

ers and grinners. Their serious faces look down upon us, from their majestic pedestals, along all the past. The consuls and senators of republican Rome seem to shed a solemn glory through those stately centuries. The men who conquered at Worcester, and saved the English Constitution, did their work in the fear of Jehovah, and in full view of the Judgment Day. And can you think of the men who stepped forth upon Plymouth Rock, and who founded this latest and greatest civilization, as any other than men of profound seriousness?

And not less, in this hour of peril, is seriousness demanded. On us—the people of America—rests the responsibility, with the help of God, of saving our institutions. We must face that tremendous task. And the men—so insensate—who can sit together in jovial circles, and make merry over the wounds and sorrows of our beloved country, are doubtless the very individuals referred to by Douglas Jerrold, who, according to his expression, would whet their knives upon their fathers' gravestones, to stab their mothers with!

That this is an hour for seriousness, seems to be asserted by instincts whose significance we may not have recognized. For example: we read in the public journals that sales for the Inaugural Ball move slowly! And is it strange? A National Dance in the midst of National Disunion, and on the brink of a Civil War! I do not wonder that the sales lag. Men feel that this is no time for minuets and mazourkas, for schottisches and quadrilles!

It seems to me that, were I to stand on that ball room floor to-morrow night, I should discover a fatal incongruity between those festivities and all men's thoughts. I should recall the imagery of Boccaccio, as he portrays the revelries of his countrymen, when the

Plague was making a charnel house of Italy. I should think of that famous ball in "Belgium's Capital," on the night of Waterloo; when the chivalry of the kingdoms were tripping the gay steps of the dance, so soon to be changed to hurrying haste, and martial strides, and to find their speedy rest in the ghastly quietude of the soldier's grave. I should remember how, in Paris, in 1830, a few hours before the Revolution, at a gorgeous ball in the Palais Royal, Charles X. chided a nobleman on his pallor and his sadness, and how the nobleman responded, "Sire, it seems to me that we are dancing over the mouth of a volcano!"

Not merely serious thought, however, but prayerful thought, also, is especially demanded by these times, and belongs among the duties of the hour.

We are an assemblage of Christian men and women, and we believe that one name of God is—The Prayer Hearer. At all times, do we feel it our duty to plead our country's interests before him—but with a peculiar earnestness, in such a crisis as the present.

And if any people ought to know the value of prayer it is the American people. From 1620 to 1783, this nation was swathed and baptized in prayer. Never has any government been founded, not even the old Hebrew Theocracy, in which there was a more distinct recognition of the God of Nations, and the efficacy of praying to him. And if you will glance through the writings of Washington and Jefferson, of the Adamses and the Otises and the Lees, you will observe that so overshadowing, in their minds, was the thought of God's actual interposition in human affairs, that they could scarcely pen a private note, or a military despatch, or a legislative resolution, without expressing this conviction.

And among the hopeful signs at the present moment,

is a partial restoration of this sentiment among our public men. There can be no doubt that Mr. Buchanan's recent recommendations of a resort to prayer, are entirely sincere and heartfelt. And an extract in one of our City Dailies, last week, struck a sacred chord of tears as it summoned before us the very tones of our Patriot Fathers: "Abraham Lincoln professes to entertain a profound conviction that this country is in the hands of God, the Maker and Ruler of all men—that all things are ordered by his hand, and that to him alone can he, as President of this people, look for aid, guidance, and ultimate success."

Noble sentiment! Noble man!

"In hoc signo vinces"!

It is like a living breath from the lungs of Seventy-Six!

And the very best of all the speeches which our new President made on his tour to the Capital, was his first one; when, bidding good-bye to his old neighbors and life-long friends, with tears running down his cheeks, and sentences broken off because his heart would not let his mouth finish them, he asked them to remember him in their prayers.

Yes, President elect! and though those words were spoken in low tones, and a thousand miles away, we heard them here in Poughkeepsie, and heard have they been, across the entire bosom of the continent. And we, too, will try to pray for you. At our firesides, in our closets, in our public assemblies, we will remember that tender and touching request; and on the aspirations of millions of hearts shall you be upborne to the God of Presidents and of Kings.

I shall not linger long upon the duty mentioned last in the cluster which we have combined—the duty of *super-partisan* thought.

When the Declaration of Independence was promulgated, as we all know, there were conflicting parties among the Colonists. But as the clouds of that awful crisis rolled up the sky, all patriotic men felt that if American liberty was to be won, partisanship must be ignored.

My friends, we are in the midst of a Revolution, not less vast, it may be, nor less influential, than was that mighty one of the Eighteenth Century: and if the Constitution, which that struggle achieved the right of making, is to be saved from demolition, there is need of the same patriotic superiority to party feeling.

Mr. Bancroft has recorded a remark of Christopher Gadsden: "There ought to be no New England man, no New Yorker, known on the continent: but all of us Americans." So, to-day, there ought to be no tenacity of old organic distinctions; but all of us Americans, sons of a glorious lineage, and as such sworn to uphold, while he does right, the hands of him whom Providence has made our leader in this tremendous confusion.

I have thus exhibited the triple obligation of seriousness, of prayerfulness, and of super-partisan feeling, as belonging, with especial emphasis, to the duties of the hour.

I have reserved, for a separate and final consideration, one other duty—the duty of *holding fast to principle, and of swearing anew our allegiance to the right.*

In such a time as this, when all other things become unsettled, there is imminent danger that our *conscientious convictions* will partake of the prevalent relaxation and confusion.

In such a time as this, when so many vast interests are imperilled, there is imminent danger that we shall be overpowered by the pathetic pleadings of a mistaken

Patriotism, and, for the sake of present safety, barter away our holiest vows; and, to win a temporary advantage, sacrifice righteousness and truth.

Oh! how impressive is such a plea! How seductive are such temptations!

It is fitting that we should gather together, in the sanctuary, to-night, and here, before God, take oath over again, that, whatever else may impend, we will never give up the Right! Here, and to-night, let us refresh our memories, and reinvigorate our moral purposes, with a new recital of the truth, that, while civil dissension is a great evil, while sectional hostilities are a great evil, while disunion and war and devastation are a great evil, there is yet one evil, evermore and everywhere, infinitely greater, and that is, *to do wrong!* What shall a man give in exchange for his conscience? And what beauty, henceforth, can there be for our hearts, in those once sacred words, "The Republic," "The Union," "Our Native Land," if they have come to signify moral degradation, assent to infamous wickedness, and the subserviency of thirty millions of free-men to the cat-o'-nine-tail dictation of an oligarchy of a few thousand slavocrats!

The most fearful thought to any man, who, with proper spirit, comprehends the features of this crisis, is, that any concession to the slavery-propagandists, at this particular time, involves not merely a fatal acknowledgment of weakness in the government, but the thorough debauchery of the conscience of the people. It was bad enough ever to concede to this great system of wickedness. But to make such concession in 1783, in 1820, in 1850, was a very different thing from doing so in 1861. *They* sinned: but it was with a moral sense upon this subject only partially educated. If *we* sin, it will be a conscious, a deliberate,

an inexcusable death-stab to our moral natures. "When the unclean spirit," which had gone out of a man, is permitted to re-enter his flesh-temple, "he findeth it empty, swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. *Even so shall it be also with this wicked generation.*"

It is, of course, not my province to say anything, in this place, about innocent measures of conciliation; but it is my province, and my duty, to give utterance, from this Christian pulpit, to Christian truth concerning *compromises*. We profess to be a Christian assembly; and I do declare to you, that, in that Gospel which we accept as of supreme authority, there is no such thing recognized as a compromise. Between right and wrong, between truth and falsehood, between God's empire and Belial's, Jesus Christ asserted an eternal and an irreconcilable hostility. Why, my friends, Jesus would not have been crucified had he been willing to make a compromise with Caiaphas, Annas, and the other hierarchs. The first Christians might have escaped persecution, had they been willing to compromise by casting a handful of incense on Cæsar's altar.

But not only is compromising a wickedness: it is also a blunder. The greatest mistake our fathers committed, was in introducing the first compromises: and every compromise which has been made since has defeated its own purpose, and involved us in deeper difficulty.

Let us do what is right, and leave it with God to take care of us.

And if it be affirmed, that the Union cannot be held together without granting a new lease to slavery, that is, without doing wrong, our answer is, first, let us

make the experiment. All our present woes have come upon us through a strange forgetfulness, on the part of Northern people, of the simple proposition in human nature, that there can be no better PACIFICATOR, than FIRMNESS IN THE RIGHT.

My friends, in your juvenile encounters with English literature, did you happen ever to meet with this choice sample of the narrative style?

“An old man found a rude boy upon one of his trees stealing apples, and *desired* him to come down; but the young sauce-box told him plainly he would not. ‘Won’t you?’ said the old man, ‘then I will fetch you down’: so he pulled up some turf or grass, and threw at him; but this only made the youngster laugh, to think the old man should pretend to beat him down from the tree with grass only. ‘Well, well,’ said the old man, ‘if neither words nor grass will do, I must try what virtue there is in stones’: so the old man pelted him heartily with stones, which soon made the young chap hasten down from the tree, and beg the old man’s pardon.

“MORAL.—*If good words and gentle means will not reclaim the wicked, they must be dealt with in a more severe manner.*”

My friends, on the 4th day of the seventh month, 1776, a little band of husbandmen planted a tree. At the time, it was only a slender and fragile shoot; but it was from a very ancient stock—from the old Tree of Liberty, which, with infinite sacrifice, had been kept alive through long, dark centuries, and which, driven from all other lands, was planted here on this fresh soil, as the last and forlorn hope of humanity.

But when the story went abroad in the earth, that that slender twig had been planted, great armies hastened over the seas to pull it up and to tear it to pieces.

The little band of husbandmen, however, were resolved to die rather than see it destroyed; and so they made a ring with their own bodies around it, and there they stood and battled seven years, till at last those great armies sailed back over the seas, convinced that they could not root up the young tree of Liberty. Then immediately did it thrive lustily and fast. Its roots shot far and deep into the soil, and clutched the very bowels of the continent, and its branches rose high and wide into the sky, until they overspread the whole land, and the oppressed of all* nations came hither and sat down beneath its shadow and ate of its fruit.

But the husbandmen who had planted this tree and had fertilized its soil with their blood, knew that without some defender the tree would be destroyed after they were dead. Therefore, they ordained that every four years, through all coming time, a man should be selected from among those who sat under the tree, whose duty it should be to "preserve, protect and defend it." Under this admirable system, no deadly harm had befallen the tree, until, in the month of November, of last year, the "old man" who was, for the time, the Tree-keeper, looked forth into the garden, and found a great many rude boys up among the branches, not only "stealing" but destroying the fruit, stripping off the leaves, sawing and cutting into the branches, and rapidly laying waste the tree. And what did the "old man" do? He very softly and politely "*desired*" them "to come down"; but each "young sauce-box told him plainly he would not." Whereupon the Tree-keeper, though with great timidity, and frequently "countermanding" his own orders, fitted out a military expedition against them, which would have

*EXCEPT OUR OWN.

had a fine effect, had it not been for one slight drawback, to wit, that the expedition had not been furnished with any weapons! Of course, "this only made the youngsters laugh, to think the old man should pretend to beat them down from the tree with grass only." And, now, what did the Tree-keeper do? Why, hearing thousands of voices crying to him to deal with these boys "in a more severe manner," he was on the point of doing so: when the boys up in the tree cried out to him that he must not "throw stones" at them, that it would be very wrong for him to do so, that he had no right to do so; and he asked them to tell him why it would be wrong. Whereupon they replied, that "of course he had no right to bring them down, by throwing stones at them, for that would be '*coercion*'!"

This seemed to the Tree-keeper an entirely new view of the case. And, staggered by the irresistible argument, he went back meekly into his house, saying to himself, in melancholy tones, "It is true, I promised to 'preserve, protect and defend' this Tree of Liberty, and those boys are hacking it to pieces, and they ought to come down from the tree. I know that I have authority to 'desire' them to come down, and to throw turf at them: but then, if they do not obey, of course I have no right to '*coerce*' them to come down."

Ah, Sir Tree-keeper, had you but recalled the wisdom of the "Elementary Spelling Book," which you studied in your youth, long ago had those "rude boys" hastened down from the tree and begged your Excellency's pardon.

We come back to the exact issue. We lay it down as the Christian truth concerning our duty, at the present hour, to consent to no further concessions to slavery. And if we are told that some concession is neces-

sary to the preservation of the Republic, we reply by utterly denying the statement. Concessions cannot save us. Concessions have been our national curse. If we are to be ruined, it will be the consequence of concessions. If we desire to pacify the South, let us prove to them that we *mean what we say*. Firmness in the right is the best pacificator. But if adhering to the right will not save the Union, then the Union is not worth saving. Let the Gulf States go out and compact their sand-rope Union out of Disunion elements; and if they will, let the Border States follow, and tie themselves upon the skirts of the Piratic Confederacy; but let us come out from among them, and touch not the unclean thing!

But while we are talking, moments heavy with destiny are rolling on.

Four years ago, to-morrow, an aged man, the companion and survivor of the mighty statesmen of a departed generation, ascended the Capitol steps, and, in the presence of the wise, the eloquent, and the beautiful, of the Republic, with solemn mien and gesture, assented to this oath: "I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

But while in the very act of enduing himself with the responsibilities of this fearful Sacrament, he unfolded his manuscript, and among other stately sentences, pronounced these:

"Next in importance to the maintenance of the Constitution and the Union, is the duty of preserving the government from the taint or even the suspicion of corruption. Public virtue is the vital spirit of Republics, and history proves that when this has decayed,

and the love of money has usurped its place, although the forms of a free government may remain for a season, the substance has departed forever. * * * Having determined not to become a candidate for reelection, I shall have no motive to influence my conduct in administering the government, except the desire ably and faithfully to serve my country, and to live in the grateful memory of my countrymen."

Ah, what lofty sentiments! Multitudes who had endorsed his election were momentarily elated with the hope of beholding once more, a wise, an impartial, a firm, a pure, a truly national and conservative administration of the government.

Alas, how sad our delusion!

We did not then know that the eyes of Andrew Jackson had looked through this man, and that the dying lips of Andrew Jackson had pronounced him hollow.

Alas, we did not then know that this high-toned preacher of public virtue and of an uncorrupted government, had been elevated to his office by stupendous frauds in his own state, and that he would immediately surround himself with a council of broken-down gamblers, of treasury thieves, and of conspirators against the Constitution.

Alas, we forgot, for one moment, that the hand which was then raised to take the oath of office, was the very hand which wrote the most immoral Manifesto ever promulgated in Christendom.

How could we have been so deluded as to hope for good fruit from such a tree! "Do men gather grapes from thorns or figs from thistles"?

O, James Buchanan! in our hearts, to-night, remembering this auspicious beginning, this ignominious, this disastrous ending of thy Presidency, we pity thee.

Who would, for any reward, take thy name in history, and thy place "in the hearts of thy countrymen"! Alas, poor, weak, timid, vacillating, selfish old man, what thoughts must be thine, to-night!

To-morrow, too, another and a younger man goes up those same Capitol steps, to take that same solemn Sacrament. Our hearts, our prayers, shall go up with him. May he not disappoint the sacred hopes of millions!

"Be just, and fear not:

Let all the ends thou aim'st at be thy country's,
Thy God's, and truth's; then if thou fall'st, O Cromwell!
Thou fall'st a blessed martyr."

My friends, four years more have passed out of our lives.

Within this period, what changes have taken place—changes to us all!

This city, I am told, has experienced changes—changes in its edifices, changes in its population, changes in its churches, changes in its pastors. How many bright and earnest days have these years let deep into your breasts! Ah, how many sad and stricken and desolate ones! And as you look about you here, this evening, I know that some of you are missing dear hearts, which, four years ago, were beating in joy and health by your side.

Four years onward from to-night, and where shall we be? Surely not all here—not all on the earth! Sorrow, days and nights of anxiety, must overtake us—each and all. It is probable that by the open graves of some of you I shall be summoned to stand, and, as earth meets earth, and forms beloved are covered from view, I shall have to whisper, in the ears of the desolate, the consoling words of Him who is the Resurrection and the Life. Or, perhaps, that duty will be re-

versed; perhaps he, whom you have so lately called to come among you, death-stricken in life's hopeful morning, before he has become wonted to his armor, shall be commanded to put it off, and, that sword which he had so poorly learned to wield, be bidden to lay down forever.

Four years onward from to-night, if I am alive, I shall probably be standing in this pulpit, and looking forth on some faces which would now be strange. Some of you will be gone from us, and from earth. I shall cast my eyes abroad over the congregation, and shall search in vain for features now becoming to me so well known and so much loved. But though I may see you not, I shall think of you. And, oh! let me have it to tell those who may be here then, that your life went not down in draperies of darkness and in rayless gloom: give me, rather, the ability to tell them that, with ministering angels girding you about like a retinue of golden summer-clouds about the setting sun, in the very hour of death casting a radiance of saintliest beauty far back across the dun pinnacles of the past, and with a well-founded hope as your pillow of peace, you sank to rest on the glory-couch of the Christian.





